

To the Committee:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Concerning Proposed Bill 374 "An Act Requiring Behavioral Health Assessments for Children":

In my opinion, the Bill starts with a very high valuable initial or interim goal, that of assessing the behavioral (mental) health of youngsters from Middle School age through High School. That does place a mandate on the population to systematically evaluate our youngsters as they grow. However, the bill does not specify, enumerate or identify any uses for the assessments as goals for the individual or common good. Limiting this "confidential" report to parents or guardians renders the report useless, in the main analysis. Even the professional evaluator's only report outside the parents or guardians is to the state Board of Education that the child was evaluated. The Board of Education can do nothing with these reports except total them and report numbers and percentages of children evaluated.

Ethically, one should not be conducting tests for problems, conditions, health or status in general unless one has a resolution or set of resolutions to any conditions, problems or deficiencies identified by the assessments, tests, and so-forth. The lack of direction for addressing the outcomes or reports of these assessments is a fatal ethical flaw in the Proposed Bill as it now reads (March 5, 2013). Conducting tests for the sake of conducting tests without a useful outcome is a worthless waste of resources.

The Purpose Statement should have read "To provide behavioral health assessments *for* children, and continued to state that the assessments are to assist professionals and parents in the early identification of behavioral and mental health conditions that may be properly addressed to assure the healthy development of the children of the state. In the body, it should also identify and possibly list potential responses and actions to be taken utilizing the reports of these assessments within the medical/psychiatric/behavioral professional service community.

Respectfully submitted,

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